

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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TAGS: PINT, RP

SUBJECT: LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COUNCIL AND THE SUCCESSION ISSUE

BEGIN SUMMARY: REGIONAL SANGGUNIANG BAYAN (SB) FEDERATIONS, WHICH MET APRIL 26, REPORTEDLY GAVE PRESIDENT MARCOS "FREE HAND" IN SELECTING MEMBERS OF THE PROSPECTIVE LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COUNCIL (LAC). WE ARE AWARE OF NO DEADLINES FOR ITS ORGANIZATION AND, GIVEN HIS MAY TRAVEL SCHEDULE, MARCOS WOULD HAVE TO MOVE QUICKLY IF HE WANTED IT OPERATING SOONER RATHER THAN LATER. SOME SB FEDERATIONS RECOMMENDED THAT PRESIDENT NAME HIS WIFE AS HIS SUCCESSOR, BUT GUIDED PRESS HAS NOT PLAYED THIS UP. WE DOUBT PRESIDENT IS READY TO TAKE SUCH A MAJOR STEP BEFORE HE PERMITS LAC TO "ADVISE" HIM ON SUBJECT. END SUMMARY

1. SPEAKING IN BAGUIO APRIL 16, PRESIDENT MARCOS ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO CONVENE THE SANGGUNIANG BAYAN (SB) IN ORDER TO DRAW UP MEMBERSHIP LISTS FOR THE SANGGUNIANG PAMBANSA (LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COUNCIL) WHICH WOULD ADVISE HIM ON LEGISLATIVE MATTERS. GUIDED PRESS EMPHASIZED LAC WOULD BE DIFFERENT FROM INTERIM NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (INA) PROVIDED FOR IN 1973 CONSTITUTION AND STRESSED THAT WHILE PRESIDENT HAS SAID HE WOULD FOLLOW LAC'S ADVICE, IT WAS NOT BINDING. DURING HIS REMARKS AT BAGUIO, PRESIDENT ALSO INDICATED HE WOULD ABANDON REFERENDA ONCE LAC ESTABLISHED. GUIDED PRESS DID NOT CARRY THIS REMARK

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ALTHOUGH RADIO DID AND THIS WAS PICKED UP BY AP AND

CARRIED IN PACIFIC STARS & STRIPES. IN DISCUSSING POSSIBLE LAC MEMBERSHIP, AP REPORTS MARCOS MENTIONED CABINET MEMBERS, PRIVATE SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES, AND ALSO MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES. AS FAR AS WE KNOW, ARMED FORCES PARTICIPATION IN LAC HAD NOT BEEN MENTIONED PREVIOUSLY.

2. ON APRIL 26, SOME 1,600 SB MEMBERS IN 13 REGIONS MET TO DISCUSS COMPOSITION OF LAC AND MAKE OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS TO PRESIDENT. SECRETARY OF DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (DLGCD) RONO TOLD PRESS DLGCD REPRESENTATIVES ATTENDED EACH REGIONAL SESSION TO OFFER "SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE." ALL PROPOSALS MADE BY THE SB WOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE RECENTLY ESTABLISHED SB SECRETARIAT IN DLGCD HEADED BY RONO'S EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT, 28 YEAR-OLD RONALDO PUNO, FOR COLLATING AND EVENTUAL SUBMISSION TO THE SB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (SEE A-77 OF MARCH 30, 1975).

3. ON APRIL 27, THE GUIDED PRESS REPORTED REGIONAL SB FEDERATIONS HAD GIVEN PRESIDENT MARCOS "FREE HAND" IN SELECTING MEMBERS OF THE LAC, ALTHOUGH URGING HIM TO APPOINT 91 MEMBERS OF THE SB REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES EXOFFICIO MEMBERS. PRESS REPORTED THAT AMONG OTHER RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY SEVERAL REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS WAS ONE "URGING HIM TO ISSUE A DECREE ON SUCCESSION." ON APRIL 30, SECRETARY RONO ANNOUNCED THERE WAS SENTIMENT AMONG SB MEMBERS THAT LAC NOT EXCEED 120 OR 130 MEMBERS LEST IT BECOME UNWIELDY.

4. MANILA SB MEETING, PRESIDED OVER BY MANILA MAYOR BAGATSING, ADOPTED TWENTY RESOLUTIONS IN ITS FOUR HOUR MEETING. EIGHT OF THESE "CONGRATULATE OR THANK" PRESIDENT AND MRS. MARCOS FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NATION IN AREAS SUCH AS FOREIGN POLICY, DEVELOPMENT, BEAUTIFICATION, ETC. THE MORE SUBSTANTIVE RESOLUTIONS INCLUDED: (A) RECOMMENDATION FOR SUCCESSION DECREE WITH NO NAMES SPECIFIED; (B) RECOMMENDATION THAT THE PRESIDENT NOT SUMMON INA (SPONSORED BY NEWLY APPOINTED MAYOR OF QUEZON CITY, ADELINA RODRIQUEZ, WIFE OF GOVERNOR OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RIZAL); (C) RECOMMENDATION THAT THE PRESIDENT NOT CALL ELECTIONS UNTIL AFTER THE ZCRISIS" IN MINDANAO IS RESOLVED; AND (D) RECOMMENDATION THAT PRESIDENT BE GIVEN THE "WIDEST POSSIBLE LATITUDE OF DISCRETION TO CONSTITUTE THE LAC," I.E., APPOINT ITS MEMBERS.

5. PRESIDENTIAL CONFIDANTE AND SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION CHAIRMAN, ADRIAN CRISTOBAL, HAD TOLD

DCM ON APRIL 20 HE EXPECTED MARCOS INTENDED TO PERMIT THE LAC TO DEAL WITH THE SUCCESSION ISSUE. CRISTOBAL NOTED THAT THE LAC WOULD BE A USEFUL MECHANISM THROUGH WHICH POLITICIANS COULD REQUEST AND RECEIVE FAVORS ALTHOUGH HE ADMITTED THAT IF OLD SOCIETY POLITICIANS WERE INCLUDED, THE LAC MIGHT BECOME AN ATAVISM AND TROUBLESOME.

6. COMMENT: AFTER TWO-WEEK SPATE OF PUBLICITY ABOUT MEETING OF SB AND CREATION OF LAC, STORY HAS BEEN ALLOWED TO DIE. PRESS HAS ESTABLISHED THAT PRESIDENT HAS BEEN GIVEN "FREE HAND" ON NAMING LAC MEMBERS AND MARCOS HAS BEVY OF "RECOMMENDATIONS" HE CAN IMPLEMENT IF HE DESIRES. GIVEN PRESIDENT'S PREOCCUPATION WITH PREPARATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL, LAC COULD CONTINUE IN LIMBO FOR SOME TIME ALTHOUGH CONFUSED AND HASTY LAST MINUTE LAUNCHINGS OF INSTITUTIONAL "INNOVATIONS" HAS BEEN CHARACTERISTIC NEW SOCIETY PRACTICE (CF. REFERENDU., FIRST ANNUAL MEETING OF SB ASSOCIATION IN JANUARY, ETC.). RESOLUTION OF SUCCESSION SEEMS EVEN FARTHER DOWN THE ROAD. PRESUMABLY IT WILL INVOLVE THE STILL TO BE CONSTITUTED LAC ADVISING THE PRESIDENT ON HIS CHOICE ALTHOUGH MANY OBSERVERS FEEL THE CHOICE IS A FOREGONE CONCLUSION AND "MADAME IS THE ONE."  
SULLIVAN

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